

CHARLES DWYER... Editor.

## MYSTERIES OF CAKE BAKING

By HELEN LOUISE JOHNSON

### NO SUCH THING AS LUCK IN COOKING

Skill, Intelligence and Long Practice the Only Real Secrets—Must Learn Habits of the Range

There are, primarily, but two kinds of cake mixtures, and all the manifold big and little, round and square, large and loaf varieties are but modifications, combinations, or different combinations of these two cake foundations. There are cakes without butter, of which sponge cake is the best example, and cake with butter, of which cup and pound cakes are best known.

There is no such thing as luck in cooking. It is like any other art, the result of skill, in some, in part, in others, acquired, but in either case the result of practice. And the first step is preparation. How to measure, and then persistence in doing it, is one of the first habits of good cooking. A measuring cup holds one-half pint or two gills—or sixteen level tablespoons of dry material. Teaspoons and tablespoons for kitchen use should be of regulation size, just as much as the cups used. Any cup or spoon or handy utensil will not answer.

In general, dry materials should be sifted before measuring, and when a cup is called for, the cup should not be dipped into the flour or sugar and shaken down until leveled. This not alone adds more of the particular ingredient than is called for, but it is apt to make a messy process out of what can and should be a very dainty one. All measurements are level unless the recipe states to the contrary, and a rounded spoonful equals two level ones. For it should round as much above as the spoon rounds underneath.

To measure a cup, put the material in by spoon or scoop, round slightly, then level with a knife. Do not shake the cup to settle the flour or whatever it may be. To measure a spoonful dip it in, then level quickly and gently with the knife. Halves are divided lengthwise of the spoon.

A cupful or spoonful of liquid is all the cup or spoon will hold, not to carry from pantry to kitchen, but all it will hold right there, where everything should be ready. For the process of cake making requires dishes, one for a child's game. One, to make ready; two, to prepare; three, to go straight back—and then there you are.

Let it be cup cakes with butter that are about to be made—that difficult cake called one-egg cake. The first step is to beat butter, sugar, eggs, milk, flour, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda, salt and vanilla, and then to beat the mixture until it is light and fluffy. There are no infallible rules to guide the cook in this matter, everything depends. Ovens are as individual as people, and ranges form habits of their own. The first should be clear and even, and in such a condition that it will not have to be remedied or attended to while the baking is going on. Only experience can teach one here, but some of the hints to be may be found in keeping the interior of the stove clean around the oven; no ashes nor coal above or below. And when a stove is hot, but the oven is cool, the oven is cooling for the heat from the stove is being thrown into the room in place of going where it belongs.

In making good cake, as in making good coffee, it is necessary to have good materials to begin with. The butter may not be fat enough, or the sugar may be too coarse, and the flour may be too fine. Measure or weigh the quantities, and then sift the flour again, and mix here a division of opinion will be found as to whether the baking powder should or should not be sifted with it. Baking powder is made of certain ingredients which unite in the presence of water.

releasing carbon dioxide, a gas which is to make the cake light. The claim is that if put in at the last, after the batter has been well beaten, nearly all the gas is available for raising the cake. Whereas, if sifted with the flour and added with it to the cake, that much strength is lost. The best way is probably to experiment and find out which method brings the best results with your baking powder and your way of going.

The most difficult muscular part of cake making is the creaming of the butter and the sugar. If the butter is very cold and hard it is better to bring it to the kitchen some time before needed, for it should be about 70 degrees F. to be successfully and easily creamed. The mixing bowl may be heated with hot water before beginning to cream the butter, but the butter itself should never be heated or melted except by standing in the room, whose temperature may or may not be particularly warm. Cream the butter in a bowl with a wooden spoon, then add the sugar gradually, stirring carefully. The butter should first be a creamy consistency, and when sugar is added, sufficient beating must be done to have the mixture creamy and not like hard sauce. If the sugar has not dissolved before the cake is baked, the grains, in melting in the cake in the oven, make holes in the cake and spoil the texture. Coarse granulated cake again and again comes from insufficient mixing and beating in the sugar.

If one egg only is to be used, it should be beaten very light without separating, and added to the butter

tion. The whites of eggs are beaten to break up the tenacious albumen and fill it with air. In order to accomplish this the egg must be lifted, not beaten round and round, and the air admitted. Salt should be added, a small amount to every cake, to enhance or bring out its flavor, and if it is added to the whites while they are being beaten, it hastens the process by taking up some of the water. The eggs should be sufficiently dry to stick to the platter, and as they cannot stand after being beaten without separating, they should be used without any great delay.

In mixing the whites of the eggs with the butter, lift and fold them in, do not beat again. Stirring indicates a circular motion; beating a lifting, in which the ingredients are turned over and over, but folding in means a gentle motion—a vertical downward move and a deft turning over of the mixture, folding in as much as a time as possible. Stirring mixes ingredients; beating incorporates air; folding or cutting in retains the air already introduced.

be evenly heated and evenly risen. During the second ten minutes the cake should rise and begin to brown; and during the last five minutes, so the little and draw away from the pan.

To test when done, listen, for it should make out a slight sponging noise; or press with the finger, if done, the cake will rebound, and crust cakes are done when they shrink from the sides of the pan.

**Fours au Cafe.**  
Beat two eggs well and beat into them one cupful of cream, and then one cupful of sugar. Mix and sift one and one-quarter cups of flour with one teaspoonful of cream of tartar and one-quarter teaspoonful of salt. Stir into the mixture and add one-half cupful of soda dissolved in a tablespoonful of hot water and one-half cupful of vanilla. Bake in large square jelly cake pans until done. Cut in diamond-shaped pieces and put each two pieces together with the following:

Melt two ounces of chocolate in a double boiler. Add to this the yolks of two eggs beaten with one-half of a cupful of milk. Stir carefully until the mixture forms a soft paste; remove from the fire, add two tablespoonsful of butter, one cupful of sugar and one-half teaspoonful of salt.

**Chocolate Cake.**  
Melt two ounces of chocolate in a double boiler. Add to this the yolks of two eggs beaten with one-half of a cupful of milk. Stir carefully until the mixture forms a soft paste; remove from the fire, add two tablespoonsful of butter, one cupful of sugar and one-half teaspoonful of salt.

**Maple Sugar Cake.**  
Cream one-half cupful of butter with two cupfuls of sugar until well mixed. Beat and stir in alternately one cupful of milk and two and one-half cupfuls of flour sifted with three teaspoonsful of baking powder and one-half teaspoonful of salt. Then cut and fold in the whites of five eggs beaten to a dry stiff froth. Bake in three layers and done are put together with maple filling made as follows: Cook three cupfuls of maple sugar with one-half cupful of water until it thickens when dropped from the tines of a fork. Beat the syrup into the whites of two eggs beaten until stiff and dry. When the filling is stiff enough to spread put it between the layers and on top of the cake.

**Oatmeal Cookies.**  
To one cupful of well-sifted oatmeal add one cupful of milk, one tablespoonful of melted butter, one teaspoonful of brown sugar and one-half teaspoonful of salt. Mix these together well. Sift two teaspoonsful of baking powder with one cupful of flour, and stir it into the mixture, adding more flour as needed to make a dough just stiff enough to handle. Roll out half an inch thick, cut with a sharp biscuit cutter and bake to a delicate brown on a hot buttered griddle.

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